

In the claims:

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Please amend the claims as reflected in the following listing:

1-4. (Cancelled)

5. (Currently amended) A method for establishing subscriber connections between a central site and a plurality of subscriber premises in a digital hybrid subscriber network, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

- coupling an RDSLAM by at least one optical fiber to the central site;

- coupling the at least one optical fiber to a passive optical element in the RDSLAM;

- coupling a plurality of subscriber transmission devices to the RDSLAM via a corresponding plurality of subscriber-specific electrically conductive transmission lines;

- coupling each subscriber-specific electrically conductive transmission line to a corresponding one of subscriber-specific conversion elements in the RDSLAM; and

- coupling each of the conversion elements optically to the a passive optical element,

wherein each of the conversion elements is being constructed to:

(a) produce a subscriber-specific electric signal from downstream signals received from the passive optical element and to feed the subscriber-specific electric signal to the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line;

(b) convert a subscriber-specific upstream signal received from the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line to an upstream optical signal and to feed the upstream optical signal to the passive optical element;

(c) operate independently of other conversion elements in the RDSLAM; and

(d) receive its operating power of that conversion element through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line;

~~and coupling the passive optical element to the at least one optical fiber,~~ wherein the passive optical element is constructed to:

(a) receive the downstream signals from the at least one optical fiber and distribute the downstream signals to the conversion elements; and

(b) combine the upstream optical signals received from the conversion elements onto the at least one optical fiber.

6. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 5, further comprising the steps of: inserting a power-generating element into at least one of the conversion elements; and constructing ~~the each~~ power-generating element to produce operating power for the corresponding conversion element from electric power received through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line.

7. (Currently amended) A method according to claim 5, further comprising a step of feeding electric power from a subscriber transmission device through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line to the corresponding conversion element.

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein at least one conversion element is constructed to convert the downstream signals from optical form to electric form; and separate the subscriber-specific electric signal from the converted signals.

9. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 5, wherein at least one conversion element is constructed to separate a subscriber-specific signal from the downstream signals; and convert the separated signal from optical form to electric form, thereby to obtain the subscriber-specific electric signal.

10. (Currently amended) A digital hybrid subscriber network comprising:

- at least one optical fiber coupled to a central site at its first end;
- an RDSLAM coupled to a second end of the at least one optical fiber, the RDSLAM being located at an intermediate site between the central site and a plurality of subscriber transmission devices and, the RDSLAM being further provided with a passive optical element coupled with the at least one optical fiber, and with a plurality of subscriber specific conversion elements coupled to the passive optical element; and
- a plurality of subscriber-specific electrically conductive transmission lines coupled between the plurality of conversion elements and the corresponding plurality of subscriber transmission devices;
- wherein the passive optical element is constructed to:
 - (a) receive downstream signals from the at least one optical fiber and distribute the downstream signals to the conversion elements; and
 - (b) combine upstream optical signals received from the conversion elements onto the at least one optical fiber,
- and wherein ~~each at least one~~ of the conversion elements is constructed to:
 - (a) produce a subscriber-specific electric signal from the downstream signals received from the passive optical element and to feed the subscriber-specific electric signal to the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line;

- (b) convert a subscriber-specific upstream signal received from the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line to an upstream optical signal and to feed the upstream optical signal to the passive optical element;
- (c) operate independently of other conversion elements in the RDSLAM; and
- (d) receive its operating power of that conversion element through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line.

11. (Currently amended) A digital hybrid subscriber network according to claim 10, wherein at least one of the conversion elements comprises a power-generating element for producing operating power for ~~that the corresponding~~ conversion element from electric power received from the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line.

12. (Currently amended) A digital hybrid subscriber network according to claim 10, further comprising a power supply constructed to supply the operating power required by each conversion element through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line.

13. (Currently amended) A digital hybrid subscriber network according to claim 12, wherein the power supply comprises current feeding means in each subscriber transmission device, the current feeding means being constructed to feed direct electric current onto the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line.

14. (Presently amended) An RDSLAM equipment for a digital hybrid subscriber network, the RDSLAM equipment comprising:

- an optical interface for connecting the RDSLAM equipment to at least one optical fiber;

- an electric interface for connecting the RDSLAM equipment to a plurality of subscriber-specific electrically conductive transmission lines;

- ~~at least one~~ passive optical element coupled to the optical interface for receiving and sending optical signals therethrough; and

- ~~a corresponding~~ plurality of subscriber-specific conversion elements each coupled to a corresponding one of the subscriber-specific electrically conductive transmission lines and to the passive optical element.

- wherein the passive optical element is constructed to:

(a) receive downstream signals from the at least one optical fiber and distribute the downstream signals to the conversion elements; and

(b) combine upstream optical signals received from the conversion elements onto the at least one optical fiber.

- and wherein each of the conversion elements is constructed to:

(a) produce a subscriber-specific electric signal from the downstream signals received from the passive optical element and to feed the subscriber-specific electric signal to the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line;

(b) convert a subscriber-specific upstream signal received from the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line to an upstream optical signal and to feed the upstream optical signal to the passive optical element;

(c) operate independently of other conversion elements in the RDSLAM; and

(d) receive operating power of that conversion element through the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line and being operable to:

~~produce a subscriber-specific electric signal from downstream optical signals received from the passive optical element and to feed the subscriber-specific electric signal to the corresponding transmission line;~~

~~convert a subscriber-specific upstream signal received from the corresponding transmission line to an upstream optical signal and to feed the upstream optical signal to the at least one passive optical element;~~
~~operate independently of other conversion elements in the RDSLAM equipment; and~~
~~receive its operating power through the corresponding transmission line.~~

15. (Previously presented) An RDSLAM equipment according to claim 14, wherein each subscriber-specific conversion element comprises a power-generating element constructed to receive electric power from the corresponding electrically conductive transmission line and to produce operating power for the corresponding conversion element from the electric power.

16. (Currently amended) An RDSLAM equipment according to claim 14, wherein the optical signals are in digital form and the subscriber-specific electric signal is in analog form.

17. (Previously presented) A RDSLAM equipment according to claim 14, wherein the optical signals are in analog form and the subscriber-specific electric signal is in analog form.